

WHITE HOUSE E-MAIL CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the White House e-mail controversy continues. Five Northrop Grumman employees were so intimidated by the White House threats of jail that one was nearly fired when she refused to tell her own bosses about the administration's failure to turn over thousands of e-mail messages under subpoena.

Newly obtained information shows the White House threatened to have the five employees jailed after they found and reported a glitch in the White House computer system that prevented the discovery of more than 100,000 White House messages involving campaign finance abuses, Monica Lewinsky, Chinagate, and Filegate.

Mr. Speaker, the Justice Department does not even appear to be interested, does not want to check these e-mails for information about the campaign finance scandal.

Why has Janet Reno, the attorney general, been so silent on this matter?

GUN CONTROL IN AMERICA

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, some months ago I indicated that I would be on the floor on a regular basis bringing to the attention of this Congress and to the American people that 13 children die every day at the hands of a gun. Thirteen children die every day.

But yet this Congress, of which I am a Member, and the House Committee on the Judiciary Conference Committee on Gun Safety and Juvenile Justice, refused to meet.

On the other hand, gun-responsible legislation such as trigger locks, smart gun, and the legislation that I intend to offer that will provide educational programs and incentives to schools, hold parents and adults responsible for children that get guns has not been able to see the light of day.

But, on the other side, the National Rifle Association thinks we can save lives by ugly and undermining advertisement.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they can advertise all day long with all kinds of anecdotes, but they cannot save lives. It is time for the Conference Committee on Gun Safety and Juvenile Justice to meet and to meet now.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say to Mr. Walter Hall that I offer to his family my greatest sympathy.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

(Mr. WHITFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, it has been 4 years since the enactment of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and I am pleased to report that cable companies are responding to that Act and are delivering state-of-the-art telecommunication services in Kentucky's First Congressional District, as well as throughout the country.

Charter company has wired Murray State University with cable modems, giving students and faculty high-speed access to the Internet. Charter is also deploying cable modems in the town of Murray, Kentucky, and will offer residential services there in April.

In addition, Mediacom is offering cable modems in Marshall and Calloway counties and continues to upgrade its infrastructure with interactive fiber/coaxial cable facilities.

I am pleased that cable companies throughout the country are helping to fulfill the vision of the Telecommunications Act, which was designed to bring competition, expanded investment, and the delivery of broadband services to all Americans.

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WALTER HALL, A MAN WHO NOT ONLY TALKED THE TALK BUT WALKED THE WALK

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness to honor Walter Hall of Dickinson, Texas, who passed away on Sunday at age 92. Walter Hall, known by many as "Mr. Democrat," was a man who not only talked the talk but walked the walk. He was a true visionary, with a vision of a better life for all Americans.

He spent his life fighting for equality, justice, and opportunity. He led the charge to abolish the poll tax, supported equal rights for women, and worked for the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

He was a community activist who negotiated with the City of Houston to supply clean drinking water for Galveston County and is credited with bringing NASA to the Clear Lake area.

He was a man of humble beginnings, who became a man of great fortune and power. He served as a mentor for many young people interested in politics and was a close friend to President Lyndon Johnson and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. However, despite all his clout, he remained a man of the people, honest and forthright. He will be sorely missed.

EDUCATION REFORM MUST BE TOP PRIORITY

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, Alexis de Toqueville wrote in his famous work

Democracy in America that in America there cannot be enough of knowledge, for all knowledge benefits both those who possess it and those who do not.

Alexis de Toqueville is quoted all the time, and there is good reason for it. His commentary here on the value of knowledge, about how education is important to everyone, is an example of his wisdom. Education is an issue that is important to those with children and to those who are not parents.

If a generation of American school children is receiving an inferior education, that is a serious concern for all of us. Of course, the reality is that our Nation's public schools include excellent schools, some that are unremarkable and others that are simply a disgrace.

It is the general trend toward mediocrity, the systematic dumbing down of curricula, textbooks, and standards, that I find most alarming.

I know that millions of parents agree, and that is why education reform must be a top priority for this Congress.

AMERICANS MANAGE TO BALANCE THEIR CHECKBOOKS EACH MONTH, AND WE SHOULD DO THE SAME

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate my remarks with the remarks of my colleague from Galveston County today with the death of Walter Hall. One, he is a great American but also a great Texan.

Let me say what I am really here for is that here we go again. It seems like Yogi Berra said, *deja vu* all over again. We are counting our surplus eggs before they have hatched. Like kids who have taken their parents' credit cards and are on a buying spree, my Republican colleagues are busy spending a budget surplus that does not exist yet. It is just a wish and a prayer.

Instead of paying down the \$5.5 trillion national debt and securing the future of Social Security and Medicare, they want another tax cut. It is strange, for the first time this last 10 days we are actually having the Department of Treasury paying off part of our national debt, first time in recent history; but their efforts would stop this. We should be using the surplus to ensure that Social Security and Medicare will rest on a financially sound foundation well into the next century. My Republican friends, though, are proposing billions in tax cuts that would take this away. We need to do better. The American people need to do better. We need to do better.

THIS BUDGET IS A QUESTION OF VALUES

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, the budget is not just a question of numbers. It is a question of values. With Republicans ready to yet again propose a \$150 billion tax cut for the wealthy, they have made their values very clear. They value giving a millionaire a tax break while our seniors struggle to pay for their prescription drugs. They value giving the wealthy a tax cut while mortgaging our children's future to pay for it.

We Democrats have a different set of values. We value the commitment we have made to preserving Social Security and Medicare. We value the years of hard work our seniors have labored to build this country and the right they have to be able to enjoy their golden years without having to choose between the drugs they need and the retirement that they deserve. We value our Nation's children, who deserve a debt-free future, which is why we Democrats are fighting to use the surplus to pay down the national debt.

That is why this budget is a question of values, and that is why we Democrats are ready to fight alongside our Nation's working families for the values they deserve.

WENDELL H. FORD AVIATION INVESTMENT AND REFORM ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 438 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 438

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1000) to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize programs of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

(Mr. REYNOLDS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Rules met and granted a standard rule for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1000, the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century. As is customary for all conference report rules,

the rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote, "For my part, I travel not to go anywhere but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move."

This Nation's proud history is filled with the deeds and adventures of great explorers and brave pioneers whose journeys were often more fascinating than their destinations.

As we continue to explore, pioneer and grow, the people of a young nation no longer travel just for adventure or, as Stevenson opined, solely for travel's sake. We began traveling for a much simpler purpose. We traveled to get somewhere.

We never stop finding a way to do it safer, faster and cheaper.

Whether it was the trailblazers of the Old West laying rails across a new frontier or immigrants from the Old World digging the ditches of a new canal; the growth, prosperity and opportunities of this great Nation have been intertwined with our ability, as a people, to move.

Throughout that history, this Congress has been called upon for its leadership and sometimes its help to make certain that the transportation needs of this country and its citizens were met safely, efficiently, and adequately.

Often that work is not easy, and I commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) for his efforts and his diligence.

Mr. Speaker, air travel is as critical to our Nation's economy as its future, just as surely as wagon trains and railroads were to expanding our land and our prosperity.

Issues affecting airline, airport and aviation safety have been of paramount concern over the years, and this Congress has been working to find the solutions to those issues and problems.

Our Nation's travelers have rightfully called for a greater safety and an end to needless delays and uncertain schedules. The airline industry has called out for increased safety measures, much-needed radar modernization and funding for airport construction projects.

The Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century provides for critical changes to improve competition, reforms the Federal Aviation Administration, helps small communities and large airports alike, and most important, makes our skies safer.

Mr. Speaker, the safety of our skies and our citizens must remain a paramount concern of this Congress. This bill goes a long way toward improving airline safety by increasing investment for FAA's facilities and equipment budget by almost 50 percent so that the agency can modernize our antiquated air traffic control system.

Additionally, H.R. 1000 provides the FAA sufficient funding to hire and maintain the air traffic controllers, maintenance technicians and inspectors necessary for the safety of the aviation system.

Mr. Speaker, this bill helps airline passengers and their families by strengthening the provisions of the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act that was created following the tragic Value Jet and TWA 800 crashes.

Those terrible tragedies left already fearful family members without timely or accurate information, something that should never happen again.

Additionally, this bill spurs needed competition on behalf of American consumers. In my own district in Upstate New York, the high cost of air travel has been an ongoing concern, as we earned the dubious distinction of being one of the costliest areas in the Nation to travel by air. This region of the State, as do others across the Nation, needs greater airline competition and lower airline costs.

H.R. 1000 addresses much of that concern, by setting a dated elimination of slot restrictions at O'Hare, LaGuardia and Kennedy Airports, allowing smaller communities better access to New York and Chicago, as well as immediate access for regional jets.

The bill also creates a new funding program to help small, underserved airports market and promote their air service and for the first time funds general aviation airports.

As our reliance on air travel for business and commerce, vacations and vacations continues to grow, this bill provides the assistance needed for burgeoning airports across the Nation.

In my own region, the Buffalo and Rochester Airports will see funds from the Airport Improvement Program more than double, as will most others across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this bill not only accomplishes a great deal on behalf of competition, growth, and safety in America's aviation system, it is a product of deliberation and consensus reflecting both the complexities and agreement of the two Houses of this Congress, as well as the executive branch.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the ranking member, for their hard work on this measure. I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to insert into the RECORD a series of correspondence between the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Rules and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure concerning application of section 106 of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1000.